THE EXTENSION HORTICULTURIST

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SOMETHING FOR NOTHING

We are wondering how many of the fruit and vegetable specialists are getting something out of the Extension Horticulturist and giving nothing in return. Our present plan is to divide the country into four sections and devote one number to reports from each of these sections. Watch the November 1st number for what the Southern States have to offer.

Office of Horticultural and Pomological Investigations
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Organization of Fruit and Vegetable Growers.

Many years ago the fruit interests found it essential that they form local, state, and national organizations. It was not until comparatively recent years that anything of importance was accomplished in the organization of the vegetable interests of the country, and even today the organization of the 450,000 or more growers of vegetables for the markets is far from complete, in fact, all the membership of state and national associations combined includes but a small percentage of those engaged in the industry.

We have before us a letter from Professor H. F. Tompson of Massachusetts, who was recently elected President of the Vegetable Growers Association of America, in reply to a letter that we recently wrote him regarding the future of the Association. In our letter we suggested to Professor Tompson the desirability of a more systematic organization of state and local units; these in turn to be represented in the national organization. It is recognized that it would be impossible to secure individual memberships from any considerable percentage of the vegetable growers throughout the country, but we believe it is possible to get them interested through local organizations. Professor Tompson offers some very important suggestions in his letter, and we are taking the liberty of quoting a portion of it for the consideration of extension men throughout the country:

"Unquestionably the Vegetable Growers Association of America cannot function as it should until growers are more thoroughly organized throughout this country. It was a physical impossibility to handle the organization in the way you suggest from the start because there were no state organizations, and comparatively few local ones. Today the situation is quite different, and I believe a start can be made and should be made, and I hope will be made. Nissley writes me that he has the data in regard to the list of vegetable growers associations in this country. I see no reason why agricultural workers, particularly extension workers in all states where there are considerable vegetable interests, cannot make it a project to organize the growers for definite ends, and then we can take advantage of this opportunity to further the work of the national organization. Is there anything wrong about this from the extension standpoint? If we might have an annual convention at which there were only 200 delegates present, each one of whom represented from 50 to 400 growers, we would have a very powerful organization.

With H. F. Tompson as president and C. H. Nissley of New Jersey as secretary of the Vegetable Growers Association of America there is every reason why the organization feature of the vegetable growers should go forward in a substantial manner during the coming year. While it is not permissible for Smith-Lever extension specialists to solicit memberships or to carry on the actual work of forming local or state organizations, they can be of great service in providing the plan of organization such as constitution and by-laws, and in getting the movement under way.

Fruit growers organizations are also in need of considerable encouragement on the part of College and Extension workers. In many cases the old horticultural societies have become weakened through want of interest on the part of the younger men. This has had its reflection in the lack of support of the American Pomological Society, and if the welfare of the fruit interests throughout the country is to be properly safeguarded it must be through the strengthening of the local, state, and national organizations of fruit growers.

We would like every one who reads this and who is interested in the future of either the Vegetable Growers Association of America or the American Pomological Society, to write us their views and give us a statement regarding the strength of fruit and vegetable organizations in their territory. This will not only be of great help to us but to Professor Tompson as well.

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Field Trip of Professor Close.

During September Professor Close made a field trip to Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. The work in these states is progressing nicely. The leading lines are mentioned briefly below.

Michigan.

Fruit Specialist T. H. Ferrand's major piece of work is fertilizing tree fruits and small fruits. He believes that the greatest need of the fruit industry of Michigan is the feeding of the trees and plants. He has fertilizer demonstrations going in 23 counties. We visited Manistee and Benzie Counties to note the results of fertilizer demonstrations. The County Agent in Manistee County has 23 fertilizer demonstrations under way. In the past two years the use of nitrate fertilizer for fruit work in Michigan has increased from 100 tons to 2500 tons.

Another leading line of work in Michigan is the standardizing of commercial varieties of apples and people who are going into commercial orcharding are urged to plant certain varieties only. About 50 pruning demonstration meetings were held at which spraying, cultivating, and cover crops were also discussed. The red raspberry industry is threatened by several serious diseases and growers are cautioned not to set plants from diseased patches. In the spring ten days were spent by Mr. Ferrand in the Upper Peninsula, in response to a call for help in apple culture. All fruit marketing problems are handled by the specialist in marketing.

Illinois.

The big piece of work accomplished in Illinois this year was done in cooperation with the club section in organizing and starting club work with strawberries. There were 250,000 plants used in this work. The orders were assembled and the plants were all ordered from one nurseryman at a cost of about 65¢ per hundred.

Mr. W. S. Brock devotes about equal parts of his time to farm orchard work and commercial orchard work. He advises that the farm orchard be reduced to furnish enough fruit for the home only rather than to try to commercialize a part of the crop. His principal lines of orchard work are:- pruning, fertilizing and spraying. Several spray rings have been organized and a very useful circular has been prepared giving the amount of spray material to order for ten trees, the spray equipment necessary, the spray schedule and other things, so that the owner will know just what he has to provide for in spraying ten trees.

Indiana.

Besides the usual pruning and spraying demonstration work 22 demonstrations have been given in the thinning of peaches. This was especially useful during the present year because small unthinned fruit did not find a ready sale in the markets.

Something new in demonstration work was given in the way of loading refrigerator cars with bushel baskets of fruit. About 40 fruit growers were present at each of the 4 car loading demonstrations. Since this number of people could not be handled in a refrigerator car, an amount of floor space equal to the size of a car was marked out on the floor of a packing house and a side wall and end wall were erected to represent the side and end of a car, and the proper loading was demonstrated.

A wonderfully successful orchard tour was held in connection with the State Horticultural Society. The number of automobiles was so large that it was necessary to divide the crowd into four sections, each with a leader and lecturer, and these sections were conducted on schedule time according to a prearranged plan, so they did not run into each other at any point, and all visited the same orchards. The lecturer explained the points of special interest in each orchard and when the period of time was up the leader started the crowd for the next orchard. At some of the crossroads guides were stationed to direct the different sections along the route which should be followed.

In apple club work 31 Smith-Hughes men have organized clubs among their students, part of the work being done in class orchards and part in home orchards. There are 18 class orchards containing 1180 trees. In home orchards 89 boys are taking care of 2380 trees. Mr. Burkholder gives this work as much supervision as time will permit. At this suggestion the State Fair authorities offered prizes for the best exhibits of 10 plates containing at least 3 varieties of apples from these club orchards. These prizes were not of cash but were of trips, or equipment of use in the orchard.

Ohio.

The usual amount of fertilizer, spraying, and pruning work has been carried on. The big new piece of work this year is the organizing of 8 cooperative fruit growers associations, after the plan of the New York State Cooperative Fruit Growers' Association. Last fall Messrs.

Cruickshank and Beach took about 60 of the Ohio fruit growers on a tour through Western New York to see the actual working out of this cooperative plan. The fruit growers were so thoroughly convinced of their own need of such organizations that not only the locals, but a state organization has also been organized. One organization handled the peach crop in its section, and 3 organizations are now grading and packing apples. The other 4 which were organized could not operate because late spring frosts destroyed the fruit crop in those sections.

There has been an increasing demand for landscape demonstrations but as these cannot all be met this work will be limited to 2 homes in each of ten counties, although a plan is being developed to take care of the other work upon payment of the necessary expenses connected with it

A number of orchard tours have been made and several more are scheduled.

Most of the spray rings include both fruit and potatoes and both barrel and power outfits are being used.

The principal lines of vegetable work which Mr. Glines is doing are tomato spraying for leaf spot and early blight; the planting and fertilizing of tomatoes for canning purposes; the fertilizing of sweet corn for canning purposes; spraying and fertilizing of potatoes to which will be added next spring the use of second crop potato seed; and business management survey on 90 truck farms-- this is in its second year and will continue 3 years longer.

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Field Trip of Mr. Beattie.

During the latter part of the month, Mr. Beattie made an automobile trip to parts of Western Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, partially as a vacation trip and partially for the purpose of securing data and illustrations to be used in the preparation of bulletins now under way. During this trip the college men were not called upon, but a number of seedsmen and practical growers were visited. One point that developed during the progress of this trip was the almost universal distribution of nematodes throughout the trucking areas. This is especially true on soils that are of a sandy nature, also of the soils in greenhouses where lettuce, tomatoes, and cucumbers are grown.

The greenhouse men have spent thousands of dollars on steam sterilization, and have no doubt found it a good investment as a control measure, but the fact remains that nematodes are becoming more generally distributed every year and their control is becoming a serious problem. In many cases the growers themselves do not realize how serious a difficulty they are encountering, and become rather careless in the matter of keeping their plant beds free of nematodes, thus spreading them to all parts of their establishment. In the case of one grower visited near Cleveland, Ohio, a house that was comparatively free from nematodes was just set with plants that were badly infested. This grower did not seem to realize what a serious mistake he was making, illustrating the need

for a more definite system of spreading information among growers. The problem is, how is it to be done. In our judgment it must be through visual instruction, namely; through demonstrations.

Among Extension Workers.

Mr. Frank E. McCall writes us under date of September 21, from Raleigh, N. C. asking that we change his address from Brookings, South Dakota to Raleigh where he is now located in extension work as Garden Specialist.

Mr. W. C. Calvert of Ames, Iowa, requests that his name be added to our list as Graduate Assistant in the Pomology Section.

Professor T. C. Johnson, Director of the Virginia Truck Experiment Station at Norfolk, writes us as follows:

"Recently the Extension Horticulturist contained a note relative to the use of sulphur in the control of potato scab. We made several tests of this kind the past summer and obtained a very good scab control but where we used it in excess of 300 pounds per acre we had some injury. In one case where we used it at the rate of 600 pounds per acre, the corn planted after the potatoes has made practically no growth. In another case rye was sown and at this writing it is very yellow and making little growth. Still again, where potatoes were planted immediately after the spring potatoes to determine what affect the sulphur would have on the following crop, these potatoes are making a very poor growth as compared with others on ground that was not treated with sulphur. I am giving you this information with the suggestion that it might be well for the extension men to use caution in recommending the use of large quantities of sulphur for the control of potato scab. I am wondering if the sandy soils do not give more sulphur injury than do clay soils."

Demand for High Grade Seed.

Recently while talking with one of the leading seedsmen of the country he made the following remark: "I have been rather supprised at the willingness of truck gardeners during recent years to pay exceptionally high prices for specially selected and high quality seeds of certain vegetables. At present we find it impossible to supply the demand for pedigree seeds of certain varieties. We can produce only about so much of this especially selected seed and we are determined that we will not lower the standard of quality." This is gratifying indeed both that the growers are coming to appreciate the value of high class seeds and that the seedsmen are conscientious in their production. Cauliflower seed at $40 a pound, tomato seed at $45 a pound and celery seed at $25 a pound are examples but are worth the money on account of the crops produced by t these seeds.

W. R. Beattie, Extension Horticulturist.
C. P. Close, Extension Pomologist.